

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Withdrawn): An exhaust ring mechanism that contacts with a plasma region to subject an object to be processed to plasma processing in a processing chamber and provides an exhaust passage for process gas in the plasma region, the exhaust ring mechanism comprising:

an exhaust ring having a surface contacting with the plasma region; and  
a magnetic field forming section which forms a magnetic field having a line of magnetic force, substantially parallel to the direction of the surface of the exhaust ring.

Claim 2 (Withdrawn): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the magnetic field forming section is formed so that at least part of the line of magnetic force passes the inside of the exhaust ring.

Claim 3 (Withdrawn): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or electromagnets disposed along an inner periphery and an outer periphery on the surface of the exhaust ring.

Claim 4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or electromagnets disposed along an inner peripheral edge and an outer peripheral edge on the lower surface of the exhaust ring.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or a plurality of electromagnets disposed radially at a predetermined interval in the peripheral direction in the exhaust ring.

Claim 8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or a plurality of electromagnets disposed radially at a predetermined interval in the peripheral direction at the lower surface side of the exhaust ring.

Claim 10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the exhaust ring mechanism has a magnetic field sealing section.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 11, wherein the magnetic field sealing section is composed of a magnetic element.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): A plasma processing apparatus for processing an object to be processed by plasma, comprising:

a holder which is disposed in a processing chamber and holds the object to be processed; and

an exhaust ring mechanism disposed between the holder and the processing chamber and having:

exhaust holes,

an exhaust ring having a surface contacting with the plasma region; and

a magnetic field forming section which forms a magnetic field having a line of magnetic force substantially parallel to the direction of the surface of the exhaust ring.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the magnetic field forming section is formed so that at least part of the line of magnetic force passes the inside of the exhaust ring.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or electromagnets disposed along an inner periphery and an outer periphery on the surface of the exhaust ring.

Claim 16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or electromagnets disposed along an inner peripheral edge and an outer peripheral edge on the lower surface of the exhaust ring.

Claim 18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or a plurality of electromagnets disposed radially at a predetermined interval in the peripheral direction in the exhaust ring.

Claims 20-21 (Canceled).

Claim 22 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or a plurality of electromagnets disposed radially at a predetermined interval in the peripheral direction at the lower surface side of the exhaust ring.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the exhaust ring mechanism has a magnetic field sealing section.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the magnetic field sealing section is composed of a magnetic element.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn): A deposit shield mechanism that is in a processing chamber to protect an inner wall of the processing chamber and is in contact with a plasma region where an object to be processed is subjected to plasma processing and with an exhaust passage of process gas in the plasma region, the deposit shield mechanism comprising:

a magnetic field forming section which forms, at the end that is in contact with the plasma region, a magnetic field having a line of magnetic force substantially parallel to the direction of an electrode surface which forms the plasma.

Claim 26 (Withdrawn): The deposit shield mechanism according to claim 25, wherein the magnetic field forming section is formed so that at least part of the line of magnetic force passes the upper part of the deposit shield.

Claim 27 (Withdrawn): The deposit shield mechanism according to claim 25, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or a plurality of electromagnets disposed along an inner periphery and an outer peripheral edge provided in the upper part of the deposit shield.

Claim 28 (Withdrawn): The deposit shield mechanism according to claim 26, wherein the magnetic field forming section is configured of a plurality of magnets or a plurality of electromagnets disposed at a predetermined interval in the peripheral direction in the upper part of the deposit shield.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): A plasma processing apparatus comprising:  
a plasma processing chamber;  
a susceptor which is disposed in the plasma processing chamber and on which a substrate to be processed is mounted;  
an exhaust mechanism which exhausts the plasma processing chamber from beneath the susceptor; and

~~an exhausts~~ exhaust ring having a plurality of exhaust holes that are formed in an annular shape to surround the susceptor, are different in the opening area, and are arranged so that the opening area of the exhaust holes disposed at the outer side of the exhaust ring is larger than the opening area of the exhaust holes disposed at the inner side of the exhaust ring  
the exhaust ring having a plurality of exhaust holes which extend linearly, and which are arranged in concentric rows such that opening areas of the exhaust holes vary from one concentric row to another to increase from an innermost one of the concentric rows to an outermost one thereof.

Claim 30 (Original): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein at least three types of exhaust holes differing in the opening area are disposed in the exhaust ring so that the opening area is gradually increased from the inner side to the outer side of the exhaust ring.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the exhaust ring ~~is varied in the~~ has a plate thickness in gradual steps which concentrically varies in degrees in accordance with ~~depending on~~ the opening area of the exhaust holes.

Claim 32 (Currently Amended): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein a ~~magnet~~ plurality of magnets to prevent leak of the plasma generated in the plasma processing chamber ~~[[is]]~~ are provided at the exhaust ring.

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 32, wherein ~~the magnet is disposed in a plurality at an equal interval along the peripheral~~

~~direction so that magnetic poles of the magnets are arranged along the peripheral~~ the plurality of the magnets are arranged at regular intervals in a circumferential direction of the exhaust ring, and magnetic poles of the magnets are set, such that the magnets act in the circumferential direction of the exhaust ring.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the exhaust holes are circular holes each of which linearly extends, and has a diameter which is constant from an upper end of said each hole to a lower end thereof, and the diameter of the exhaust holes of the largest opening area disposed at the outermost side is 5 to 20 mm.

Claim 35 (Original): The plasma processing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein a plasma is generated in the vacuum processing chamber, and the substrate is processed by etching.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): An exhaust ring mechanism disposed in a plasma processing chamber of a plasma processing apparatus, formed in an annular shape to surround a susceptor on which a substrate to be processed is mounted, and having a plurality of exhaust holes ~~that are provided in plural types different in the opening area and are arranged so that the opening area of the exhaust holes disposed at the outer side is larger than the opening area of the exhaust holes disposed at the inner side,~~

wherein the exhaust holes have circular cross sections, linearly extend, and are arranged such that opening areas of the exhaust holes vary from one concentric row to another to increase from an innermost one of the concentric rows to an outermost one thereof.

Claim 37 (Original): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 36, wherein at least three types of exhaust holes differing in the opening area are disposed so that the opening area is gradually increased from the inner side to the outer side.

Claim 38 (Currently Amended): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 36, wherein the exhaust plate has a plate thickness is varied in gradual steps which concentrically ~~depending on~~ varies in degrees in accordance with the opening area of the exhaust holes.

Claim 39 (Original): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 36, wherein a magnet to prevent leak of the plasma generated in the plasma processing chamber is provided.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 39, wherein ~~the magnet is disposed in a plurality at an equal interval along the peripheral a~~ plurality of magnets including the magnet are arranged at regular intervals in a circumferential direction, and so that magnetic poles of the magnets are arranged along the peripheral set, such that the magnets act in the circumferential direction of the magnetic ring.

Claim 41 (Currently Amended): The exhaust ring mechanism according to claim 36, wherein the exhaust holes are circular holes each of which linearly extends, and has a diameter which is constant from an upper end of said each hole to a lower end thereof, and the diameter of the exhaust holes of the largest opening area disposed at the outermost side is 5 to 20 mm.